

Eli's Hospice Insider

Industry Notes

If your referring physicians seem ignorant of the fraud and abuse rules governing your interactions with them, you may be right. In 2010, less than half (44 percent) of medical schools provided instruction to their students regarding Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse laws, the **HHS Office of Inspector General** found in a new report. Schools offering residency and fellowship programs did a little better, with more than two-thirds teaching participants how to comply with CMS's fraud and abuse laws, the report indicates.

Medical students at the schools surveyed were trained on compliance with the False Claims Act, the physician self-referral law, and the antikickback statute.

The OIG says it will help grow these programs by providing additional information to the schools. The OIG report is at <http://go.usa.gov/aIQ>.

You soon may have access to training materials that will help your visiting staff stay safe, thanks to a \$1.8 million **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** grant.

University of Massachusetts Lowell won the CDC National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) funding "to research issues facing Massachusetts home-care nurses and aides and develop education and training programs," UMass Lowell says in a press release.

Previously: The grant builds on earlier NIOSH-funded work in which UMass Lowell evaluated the risks to home care workers associated with needlestick injuries and other blood exposures.

NIOSH offered a 51-page report, including safety checklists, based on its findings.

"We were really surprised at the seriousness of the conditions that home care nurses and aides confront on a daily basis," says **Margaret Quinn**, the study's principal investigator and a professor in UMass Lowell's Work Environment Department. "We uncovered a world where these 'invisible' workers face issues such as needles and dressings left on counters, cluttered rooms with no place to work and physical strain of lifting patients without assistive devices," Quinn says in the release. "At times, they encounter much more serious issues, including evidence of elder neglect and violence in the home or in the neighborhood."

Jackson, Mich.-based Great Lakes Home Health has purchased Bingham Farms-based In-House Hospice & Palliative Care with financing from **CIT Group Inc.**

With the acquisition, Great Lakes aims to gain a bigger share of the Southeast Michigan market and add an experienced hospice operation, reports Crain's Detroit Business. In the past 18 months, Great Lakes has acquired several home health providers in Michigan and Indiana, and plans to continue acquiring other companies and hiring more employees, increasing its 900-employee workforce by about 150 employees each year, **William Deary**, CEO of Great Lakes, told the newspaper. "Hospice is a small sector of health care that has gone from Kumbaya to big business, where you have publicly traded companies on the New York Stock Exchange," **Dottie Deremo**, CEO of **Hospice of Michigan**, says in Crain's. The acquisition of In-House will be one of the first of many in Southeast Michigan, Deremo believes.

"Scale will be essential for survival (because of reimbursement changes under health care reform)," Deremo told the newspaper. "There are a lot of small providers that will have difficulty surviving over the next three to five years, and there will be more consolidation."

